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# Outlook

## An imperfect world

by George Bush

I WOULD like to talk with you about America's new human rights approach in foreign affairs.

In the first place, I think it is correct we stress that we are a nation that values our commitment to human rights.

But there are complications now — complications which could be serious.

Many of our strong allies worry that this new policy is going too far. This, in their eyes, tramples on the heretofore sacred commandment against mingling in the internal affairs of another country. Our leaders indicate they don't intend such intervention. But it comes across differently.

It is one thing to spell out worthy objectives and commit to a basic principle. It is another, however, to conduct the policy in such a way that our friends abroad wonder if they must conform to our every desire in order to have our friendship and support.

We seem to blast one group of countries which have been our staunch friends. True, their democracies are less than perfect.

But look at the balance sheet of sorts that we have.

### Quiet pressure

On the negative side, these allies often violate the fundamental political rights of free speech and political expressions. We should work, bringing quiet pressure, to help change that.

On the more positive side, they have stood with us in opposition to Communist expansion.

They have not tried to export revolution or threaten freedom outside their own borders.

They have supported us in the United Nations against ridiculous assaults.

And they have permitted their own citizens a wide number of freedoms we take for granted. They permit freedom of religion. They respect private ownership of property. Often they permit free immigration and movement of people and ideas across national boundaries.

We shouldn't forget that these countries curtail generally only political freedoms. Look at the Soviet Union. You can't get an apartment, a job, or admittance to a school without the state's permission.

Some of these friends we criticize are faced by concentrated terrorism seeking to overthrow the government.

Their critics say, "If you would subscribe to our yardstick on human rights, you would not be faced with such terrorism." That is, unfortunately, a naive view.

### Guerrilla activities

Some of these friendly governments would like to move towards us on the human rights question, but the political pressures at home, given the brutal guerrilla activities that some have to face, will not permit rapid movement.

To sum it all up, the pluses outweigh, in my mind, the negatives on the balance sheet. In the imperfect world in which we live, the positive side of the ledger is important.

Our new policy on human right is threatening these friendships.

If friendship with the United States is to be determined by total support for our heartfelt commitment to human rights we will be pretty lonely in the world. Simply look around.

Enough for our friends who violate human rights. How about other countries in the world?

Here is a troubling double standard in our present approach to the question of human rights.

Most of these countries have a disregard for even the most basic of human rights. In fact, even the concept of human rights is one that they fundamentally disagree with.

The French author and columnist Jean

Francois Revel makes this point in his fantastic new book, "The Totalitarian Temptation."

This is not some confirmed right-winger. Revel is a social democrat, a member of the French Socialist party. He is also a staunch anti-Communist.

### Pidgin Marxism

Revel argues that most countries that oppose the United States, committed to the overthrow of democratic capitalism, are adherents to a crude form of communism. Revel calls "pidgin Marxism." There is no freedom for the individual. Not simply political expression, but every form of human activity is subject to the direction and coercion of the government.

These countries oppose us in the U.N. They berate us everyday. They are often committed to the export of revolution to nations friendly to the West.

Strangely, we do not single them out for their human rights transgressions.

We slap Argentina and Brazil, but we cater to Fidel Castro, whose outrageous disregard for human rights in Cuba and whose intolerance of any dissent is well known.

A U.S. senator comes back from Cuba and reports to the President that Castro will let some American families leave Cuba. The senator says we should now show our appreciation by giving something to Cuba. But what? The senator feels that because Castro is now willing to give minimum recognition to human rights we should now do more for Castro.

We publicly berate Chile and South Korea for their woeful disregard of human rights. But we express our appreciation when North Vietnam tantalizingly disgorges the names of a handful of aviators shot down years ago — something they should have done promptly in accord with the Geneva Convention.

### Totalitarian regime

The whole North Vietnamese system is widely recognized now as totally repressive. Even some of their former supporters in this country — who said all we had to do was "give peace a chance" — signed a letter expressing their public disapproval of the totalitarian nature of their regime.

Yet we seem to be moving towards them and are strangely quiet on their violations of human rights.

Continued

We concentrate on the racial injustice and lack of basic human rights for blacks in South Africa. God knows apartheid and racial injustice are abhorrent to Americans and should be condemned; but we are selective. We overlook the fact most African countries are totalitarian states which tolerate no dissent and frivolously disregard any commitment to democratic principles. Some are engaged in discriminatory or genocidal practices against other black tribal groups within their countries.

Revel says the people of Western democracies frequently forget that they live in a transparent society with freedom of the press, freedom of thought and freedom of expression. This allows our faults to be exaggerated, while the faults of totalitarian systems are filtered by their government's control of information.

"Thus," he says, "members of democratic societies get a view of their own regimes that is unfavorable compared to others, while the same kind of systematic disparagement . . . cannot manifest itself in Communist societies."

## Internal affairs

My problem is with the apparent selectivity of the administration's moral outrage and the growing concern that no matter what we intend, the policy is being viewed by friendly countries as interfering in someone else's internal affairs.

Let's face it, President Carter has effected a most improbable coalition in this country. On the political right say, "Isn't it great we are standing up to the Soviet Union on human rights?"

Many of the most liberal say, "Isn't it great our President expresses our commitment to what we really stand for as a nation?" It is hard to argue against either position.

As for me, I want to see the proof of the pudding. I want to see how many Jews are allowed to leave the Soviet Union. I want to see whether we pick up votes on the United Nations resolutions that really matter. I want to see if our rhetoric helps countries move closer to democracy and freedom.

I worry that in seeking to impose our views in the human rights field on our friends abroad, we may, given the delicate problems some governments face, weaken these friends, thus clearing the way for some system totally repressive, with no commitment to human freedoms.

In his Notre Dame speech, President Carter said, "We are now free of the inordinate fear of communism which once lead us to embrace any dictator who joined us in that fear."

I don't have an "inordinate fear of communism" but I am very concerned about the Soviet Union's threat.

Further, I still remain concerned about the stated commitment of Communist societies to world revolution.

## Struggle goes on

I don't think we should "embrace every dictator" who opposes communism. But the struggle between democracy and communism still goes on. And let's face it, there is a difference as far as our national interest and the interest of democracy goes, between an authoritarian system that resists Marxism and totalitarian states who welcome Soviet advances and advocate "pidgin Marxism."

In the authoritarian states, there is a large measure of human freedom, an inherent tendency to expand that freedom and the promise of eventual movement to democracy — witness Spain and Portugal. Not so for Bulgaria, Libya, Albania or a score of other totalitarian states.

In this country, we heard a lot about no press freedom in South Vietnam a few short years ago. We heard a lot about government restrictions on democracy. Today, press freedom is not imperfect — it simply doesn't exist. As for democracy, it is completely gone. No dissent whatsoever. No human rights as we revere them.

In Cambodia, many here at home rallied against the corruption of the Lon Nol government. There was abhorrent corruption, no doubt about it. So Lon Nol is thrown out and what replaces him? A regime committed to human rights? No, it was mass slaughter. The capital city — Pnomenh Penh — forced to regurgitate virtually its entire population, sending them on history's most devastating death march. Hundreds of thousands are wiped out in mass killings, but our emphasis on human rights transgressions seems to be elsewhere.

In Ethiopia, Emperor Haile Selassie's monarchy is toppled. His government's leadership is lined up, shot, and the country is now in the hands of radicals who harbor no dissent whatsoever.

Enough for criticism. What should be done?

## Stay strong

First, we must stay strong. The Soviet Union spends an excessive percentage of its gross national product on strategic weapons and military might.

Its activities are worrisome not only in the military field, but also in the political area. The most obvious example has to do with the Soviet-sponsored movement of Cuban troops into Angola and their quick end to democracy's chances there. I don't consider these surrogates of the Soviet Union to be a stabilizing factor.

Second, we must clarify our human rights policy, so as not to erode alliances in an imperfect world where we need allies, even though their systems fall short of our standard for human rights.

Without diminishing our commitment, perhaps we can lower our voices a little. Sometimes, quiet diplomacy can be effective.

Thirdly, we must not be afraid to advocate our own democratic capitalistic system.

I have the feeling some are embarrassed over this country's good fortune. That seems to lead almost to an apology for capitalism and democracy.

But economic and political freedom are tied together. Both are essential to the creation of a system which satisfies both man's material and moral needs.

I am not advocating here a campaign to extend our system to all other countries. Nor am I advocating a bludgeoning of others to accept foreign investment by the United States. I am suggesting capitalism is fundamental to our system just as political human rights are fundamental to our system. Both need emphasis.

The success of our economic system and the completeness of our own adherence to human rights in this country are powerful weapons in the continuing struggle between East and West.

My major foreign policy concern rests with the Soviet Union. They are strong in terms of military power. Their technology has made rapid strides.

They are driven by the knowledge they have a design for seizing control and are aided by the forces of history.

I favor a meaningful detente, but it must be a two way street.

There are plenty of ways the U.S.S.R. can demonstrate to us and to the free world they want to live in peace without expansion, without living their commitment to world revolution.

In your lifetime, I hope you are spared another war.

I hope you live to see an increased commitment to human rights around the world, for that implies an extension of freedom. This extension need not be in our mirror image.

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